

CITY OF FREEPORT
OCTOBER 29, 2015 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

I. Meeting Opened

The October 29, 2015 Special Council Meeting was opened at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Barley. The meeting was held in the Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

Council members present: Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilwoman Kasey Cuchens, Councilwoman Janice McLean, Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon and Councilwoman Jennifer Laird.

Staff present: City Planner Latilda Hughes-Neel, Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle and Parks Director Dana Weiler.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation was given by Councilman Farris, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

III. Personnel Issues

A. Billing Department Training

Mayor Barley announced that the entire Billing Department including part-time help and Barbara Moore, the Front Desk Clerk are receiving training the following week in the billing software. The training will take place Tuesday afternoon, all day Wednesday and Thursday morning. Nicole Martin is being borrowed from Water, (thanks to Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle) to work the front counter so all the billing clerks get full training. Councilwoman McLean has agreed to man the front desk so that Barbara can be trained. Mayor Barley stated that all Billing Dept. employees needed to understand every aspect of the billing dept. with passwords and codes so the Dept. can function smoothly no matter which employee is out on leave. Gary Thomas will also be trained so that he can be borrowed from the field when necessary.

B. Utility Director Candidate

Mayor Barley stated that the selected candidate for Utility Director had contacted the Mayor/City Clerk with requests for information. The candidate also requested \$75,000 salary instead of the \$65,000 salary offered.

The Council discussed the job description and the advertisement for Utility Director. Mayor Barley placed a phone call to City Attorney Adkinson who was travelling, and was told that if the advertisement stated a specific salary, the Council would have to re-advertise the position at the new salary. The Mayor called a 10-minute recess while Planner Hughes-Neel retrieved the ad which had been published. Hughes-Neel distributed the ad, which was shown to have no mention of salary.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to offer Alicia Keeter \$75,000 salary, to begin work as soon as possible. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. 4 ayes (Farris, Cuchens, McLean and Laird) to 1 nay (Brannon).

CITY OF FREEPORT
OCTOBER 29, 2015 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

C. Meter Reader Position

Planner Hughes-Neel presented this item. Gary Thomas, who was pulled from Part-Time Meter Reader into the Full-Time Billing Clerk position, has asked to be transferred to the Full-Time Meter Reader position. Water Supervisor Tuggle stated that he is in agreement with Thomas moving in to the Full-Time Meter Reader slot.

Hughes-Neel requested that the Council approval the internal transfer of Gary Thomas from Full-Time Billing Clerk to Full-Time Meter Reader.

City Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to approve the internal transfer of Gary Thomas from Full-Time Billing Clerk to Full-Time Meter Reader. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

D. Billing Clerk Position

City Planner Hughes-Neel presented this item. Per City Clerk Mattison, we have a very good candidate for the Billing Clerk position , but Mattison is requesting approval to offer \$11.00/hour.

Council Discussion: Councilwoman Brannon stated that there are full-time city employees making minimum wage; it isn't right to offer someone new more. Councilwoman Cuchens agreed, saying they need to review all salaries before making that kind of offer. Councilwoman Cuchens also stated that the Council needs to see Clerk Mattison's plan for salaries and promotions. Hughes-Neel stated that she would relay the message.

E. City Clerk Matters

City Planner Hughes-Neel stated that she needed to keep the administrative side of the City Clerk matters current during City Clerk Mattison's illness and in the transition period to hire a new city clerk. Hughes-Neel requested that the Council designate her Deputy Clerk or Interim Clerk for the purpose of keeping city clerk essential duties completed in a timely manner.

Council Action: Councilwoman Cuchens motioned to designate Latilda Hughes-Neel Deputy Clerk until a new City Clerk is hired. Councilwoman McLean seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

Parks Director Weiler took issue with the Council designating Hughes-Neel as Deputy Clerk. Councilwoman Cuchens responded and said that Hughes-Neel was the natural choice because she had performed those duties for the Council previous to the current City Clerk's hire for many months.

Councilwoman Cuchens requested that Mayor Barley speak to City Clerk Mattison about his schedule so that the Council can plan.

F. Employee Evaluations

Planner Hughes-Neel indicated that City Clerk Mattison was sending out a request to all Dept. Heads conduct their employee evaluations and have them turned in by

CITY OF FREEPORT
OCTOBER 29, 2015 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

November 6. The Counsel expressed concerns that the evaluation form being used was not the form approved by the Counsel. The form was retrieved for the Council to review. The Council reviewed the form and found it to be generic and acceptable.

Council Action: Councilwoman McLean motioned to use the new employee evaluation form (attached). Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes, motioned carried.

The Council discussed the need to have counsel present at all Special Council Meetings. Councilwoman Cuchens instructed Planner Hughes-Neel to communicate to Attorney Adkinson that the Council needed counsel to be present at any meeting where there was a possibility of a board vote.

The Council discussed when the merit raises would be effective. It was determined that they would be retroactive to October 1st.

Councilwoman McLean mentioned that the overtime buyouts need to be taken care of; that there was an error in the calculation and deduction of benefits.

IV. Meeting Adjourned

Mayor Barley called for a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman McLean motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL

Mayor

Council President

ATTEST:

City Clerk